AMAR CHITRA KATHA

KARTTIKEYA

No. 252



ADOPTED FRO THE SKANDA-PURANA-SAMHITA

Karttikeya, the commander-in-chief of the celestial army, is also known as Subrahmanya, Skanda, Guha and Kumara. In the southern states of India, Subrahmanya is a popular deity even today. Among the Tamil-speaking people he is better known as Murukan or Murugan. In the North, he is largely unknown; but he is worshipped in the East, especially in Bengal, where women pray to him for worthy sons. Like Ganesha, he too is a son of Shiva and Parvati, miraculously born. If Ganesha was created by Parvati, Karttikeya was the creation of Shiva, nurtured by Agni, Ganga and Krittikas in turn.

Six-headed, twelve-armed and seated on his vahana or vehicle, the peacock, Karttikeya is the symbol of youth, beauty and valour. In the South he also symbolises the supreme wisdom since, according to legend, he taught his father, thereby earning the name of Svaminatha.

Karttikeya though usually depicted as a bachelor is also mentioned as having two wives: Valli and Devasena.

The story of Karttikeya is found in the Mahabharata, in the Shiva, Skanda and Brahmanda puranas, and in the Ramayana. Our story is based on the Tamil version of the Skanda-Purana-Samhita.

OUR NEXT TITLE: **The Golden Mongoose** *and other tales from the Mahabharata*

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KARTTIKEYA



IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS WERE FOREVER AT WAR AND OFTEN IT WAS THE ASURAS WHO WERE DEFEATED.

AFTER ONE CRUSHING DEFEAT, AN ASURA KING NAMED AKHIRSEN WENT TO HIS DAUGHTER, MAYA, A SORCERESS.



TAKING THE FORM OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN MAYA WENT TO THE FOREST WHERE THE GREAT SAGE KASHYAPA SAT DEEP IN MEDITATION.




HER MAGIC CHANGED THE PLACE INTO A PRETTY GARDEN WHERE SHE DANCED AND SANG MELODIOUSLY...


...TILL THE SAGE LOOKED UP.
PLEASE LET ME SERVE YOU AS YOUR WIFE, O HOLY ONE.
HOW CAN I REFUSE YOU, NOBLE MAIDEN!


SAGE KASHYAPA AND THE ASURA PRINCESS LIVED HAPPILY IN THE FOREST. IN DUE COURSE A SON WAS BORN TO THEM.
YOU, MY MIGHTY SURAPADMAN, SHALL BE THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS.


LATER MAYA GAVE BIRTH TO TWO MORE SONS WHOM SHE NAMED SIMHAMUKHA AND TARAKA.
I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU WILL CONQUER THE DEVAS AND MAKE THEM OUR SLAVES.
THE VIRTUOUS SAGE OF COURSE WAS IGNORANT OF MAYA'S DESIGNS.


SO WHEN THE BOYS CAME OF AGE—
I AM GOING AWAY, MY SONS. TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOTHER, LEAD A VIRTUOUS LIFE AND BE DEVOTED TO THE LORD.


NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT. PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA AND OBTAIN BOONS WHICH WILL MAKE YOU INVINCIBLE.
AS YOU WISH, MOTHER.


THE THREE LEFT HOME AND PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO WIN THE GRACE OF SHIVA.


BUT THEIR EFFORTS DID NOT BEAR FRUIT. SO SURAPADMAN, THE ELDEST, JUMPED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.


BUT THE NEXT MOMENT HE WAS SAVED FROM ITS FLAMES BY SHIVA HIMSELF.
WHY ARE YOU SACRIFICING YOURSELF ?
LORD, I WANT TO BE THE MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE. I WANT TO HAVE A BODY THAT WILL NOT PERISH.

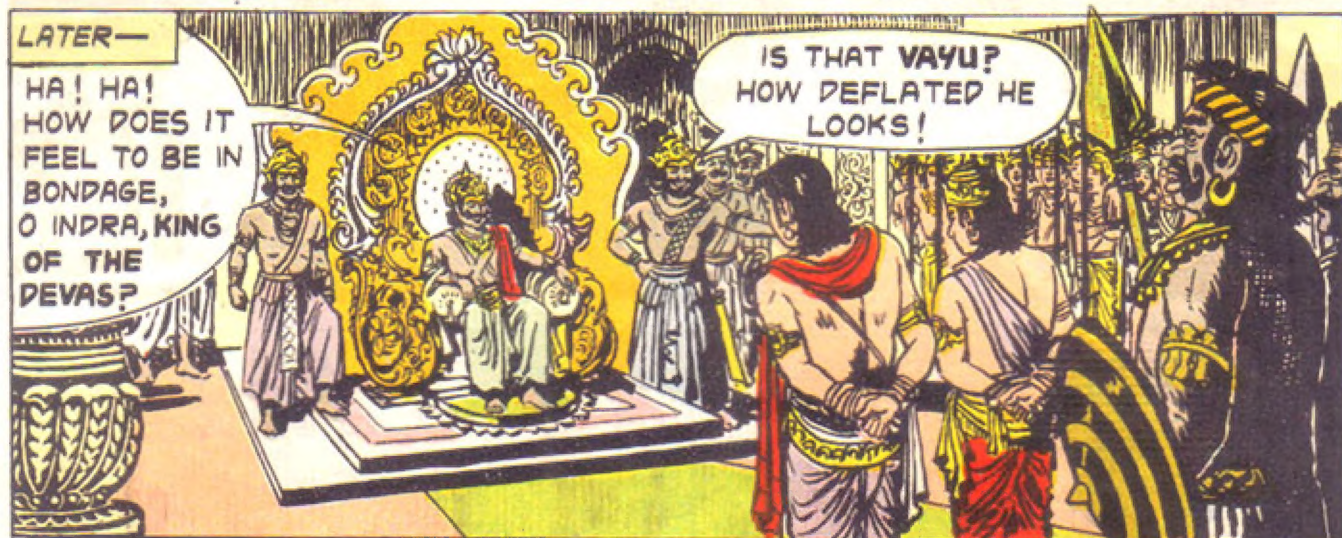

NO ONE CAN HAVE AN IMMORTAL BODY. BUT YOU WILL BE INVINCIBLE AND RULE THE UNIVERSE FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.


YOU SHALL NOT BE DEFEATED BY ANY POWER EXCEPT MINE.


INTOXICATED WITH TRIUMPH, THE THREE BROTHERS RETURNED HOME AND TOLD THEIR MOTHER ABOUT SHIVA'S BOON.
AT LAST MY DREAM WILL COME TRUE.
YES, WE DON'T HAVE TO FEAR ANYONE. WE'LL SOON DRIVE THE DEVAS OUT OF HEAVEN.


THEN, RAVAGING KINGDOM AFTER KINGDOM ON THEIR ROUTE...


...THEY CAME TO DEVALOKA. THERE, IN THE FIERCE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, THE DEVAS WERE ROUTED...
...AND TAKEN CAPTIVE.


LATER—
HA! HA! HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN BONDAGE, O INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS?
IS THAT VAYU? HOW DEFLATED HE LOOKS!


WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THEM, BROTHER?
WE'LL MAKE THEM OUR SLAVES. INDRA WILL BE OUR FISHERMAN, AND VAYU OUR SWEEPER. AND...


...SURYA WILL MAKE A FINE BALL FOR OUR CHILDREN.
A BRILLIANT IDEA! HAHAHA!

SURAPADMAN HAD A MAGNIFICENT CITY BUILT BY VISHWAKARMA, THE ARCHITECT OF THE DEVAS. HE CALLED IT MAHENDRAPURI AND MADE IT HIS CAPITAL.





* INDRA'S SON

LET'S GO TO KAILAS ONCE MORE AND PRAY TO HIM.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENED TO KAMA WHEN WE LAST VISITED KAILAS?
KAMA, THE GOD OF LOVE, HAD BEEN BURNT TO ASHES WHEN HE HAD TRIED TO DISTURB SHIVA'S PENANCE. LATER, HOWEVER, HE WAS RESTORED TO LIFE.
SHIVA, HAPPILY MARRIED TO PARVATI NOW, IS MORE COMPASSIONATE AND WILL SURELY LISTEN TO OUR PRAYER.
YES. LET'S GO TO KAILAS ONCE MORE.
AT KAILAS—
LORD, DRUNK WITH POWER THE MEAN ASURAS HAVE MADE US THEIR SLAVES. MY SON, JAYANTA IS THEIR PRISONER!
BE PATIENT! YOUR MISERIES WILL SOON END BECAUSE THEIR DAYS ARE NUMBERED.







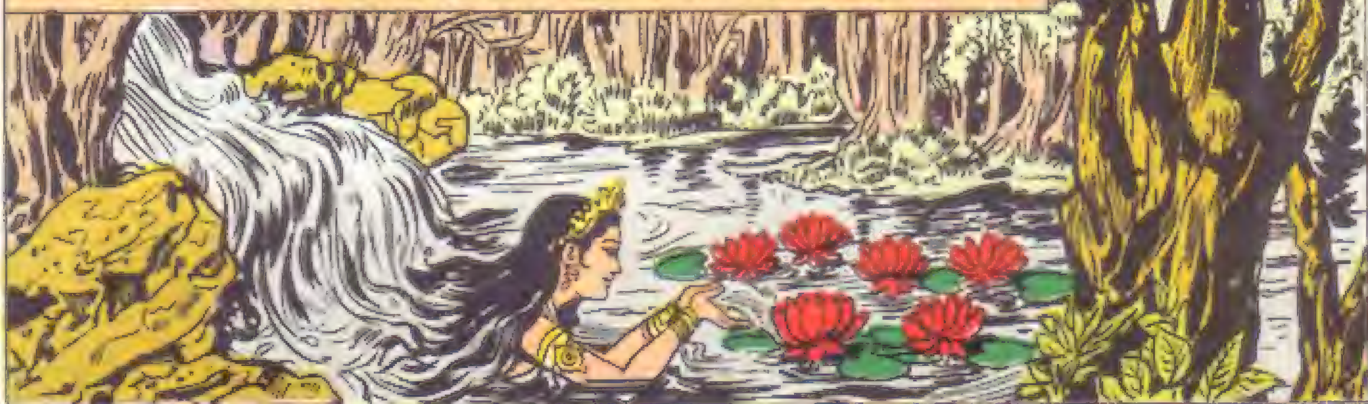


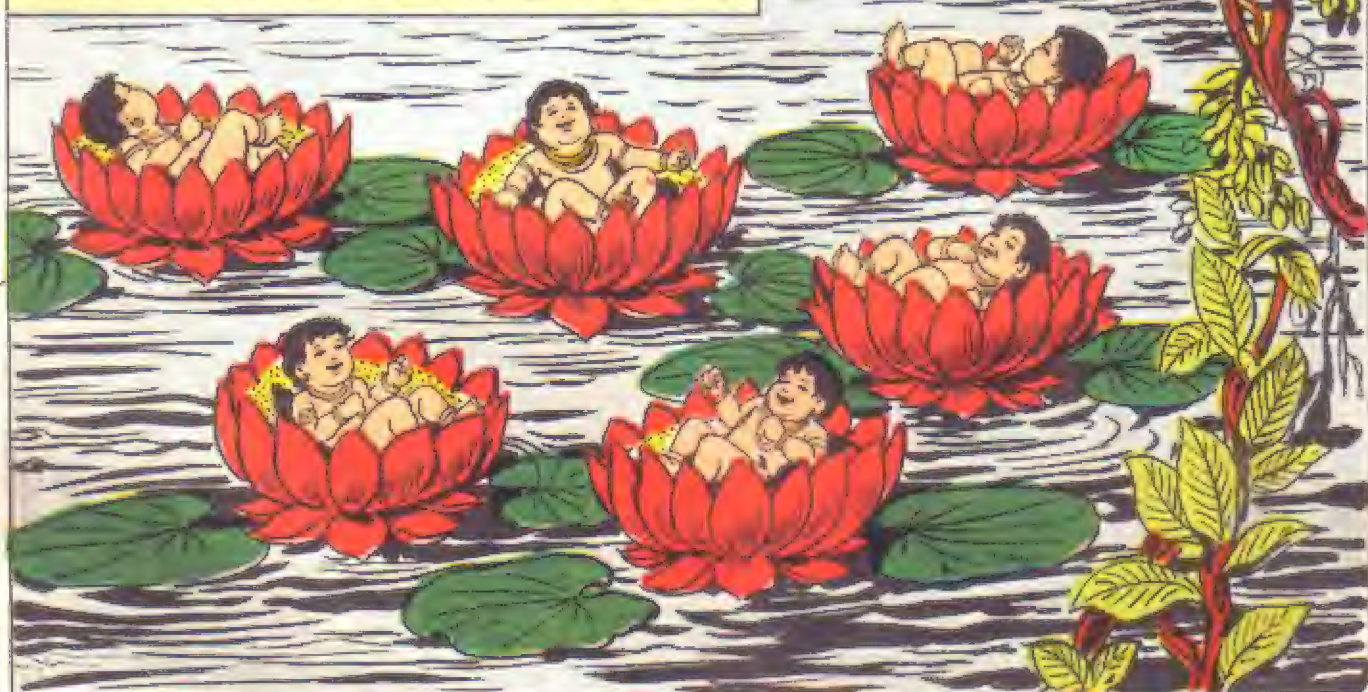


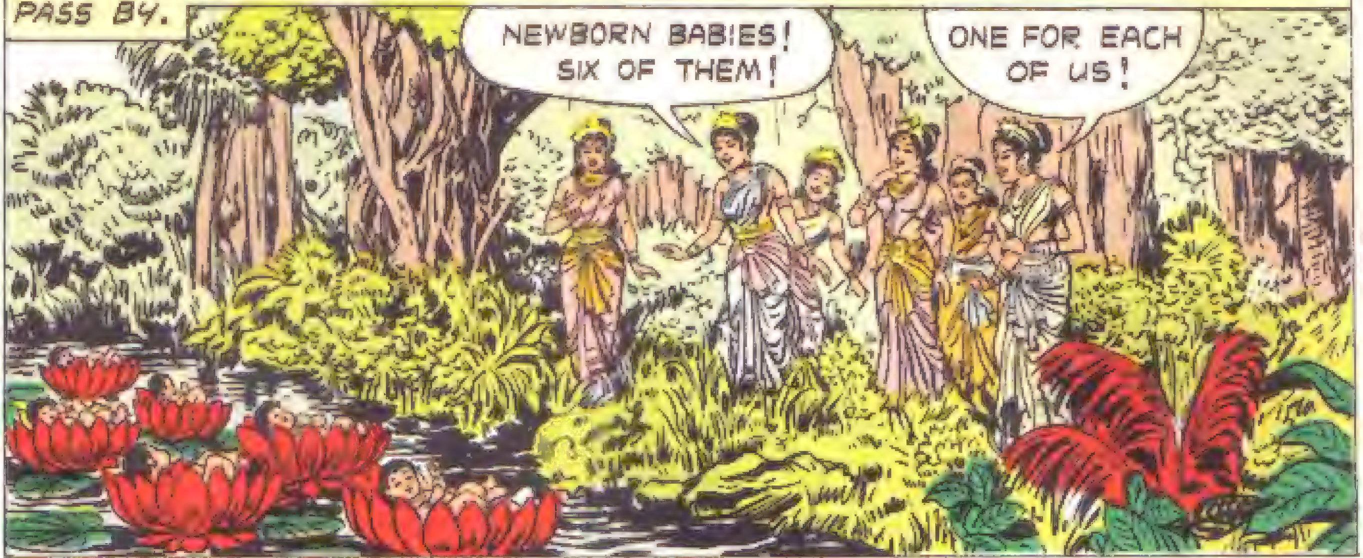
*FOREST OF REEDS


AGNI AND VAYU FLEW WITH THE SPARKS...


... TO GANGA.
SHIVA HAS ASKED YOU TO CARRY THESE TO THE REED FOREST ON THE UDAYA MOUNTAIN.

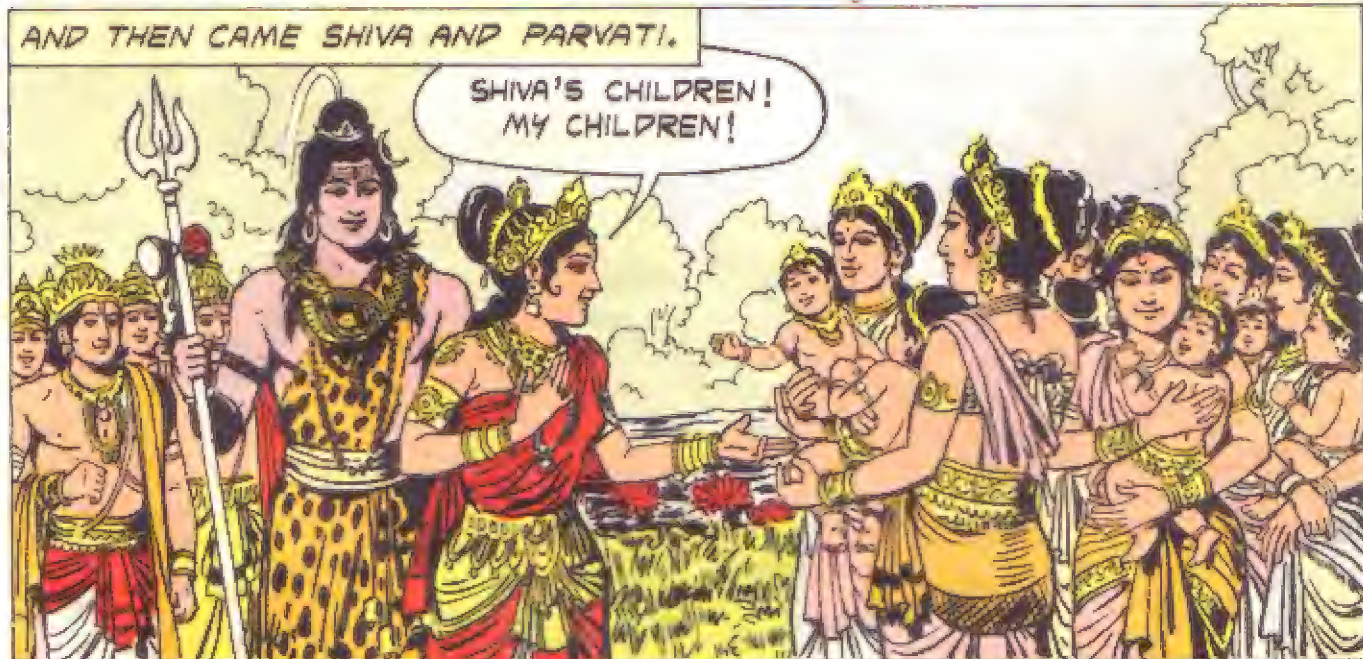

AS SOON AS GANGA BROUGHT THEM INTO THE SHARAVANA...


... THE SPARKS TURNED INTO SIX BABIES!


JUST THEN SIX CELESTIAL NYMPHS CALLED THE KRITTIKAS HAPPENED TO PASS BY.
NEWBORN BABIES! SIX OF THEM!
ONE FOR EACH OF US!


AND THE KRITTIKAS BEGAN TO CUDDLE THE INFANTS.


THE DEVAS CAME ON THE SCENE A LITTLE LATER.
LOOK! THE CHILD...
YOU MEAN CHILDREN!


AND THEN CAME SHIVA AND PARVATI.
SHIVA'S CHILDREN! MY CHILDREN!

AS PARVATI STEPPED CLOSER, THE BABIES MERGED INTO ONE.



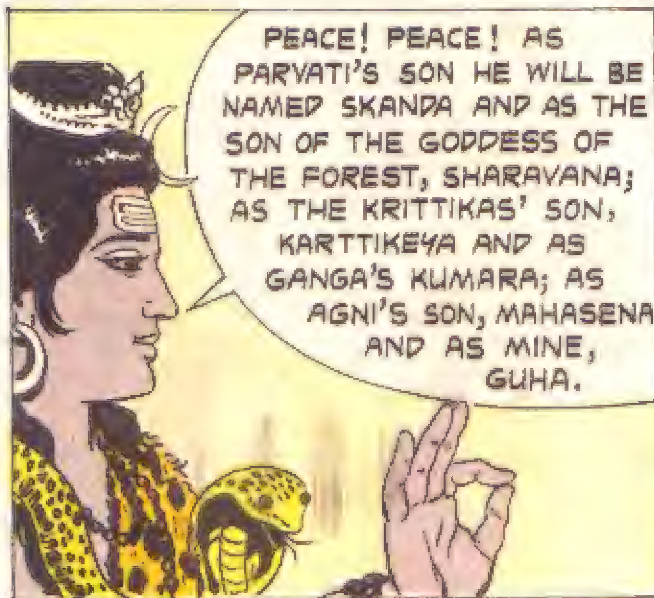


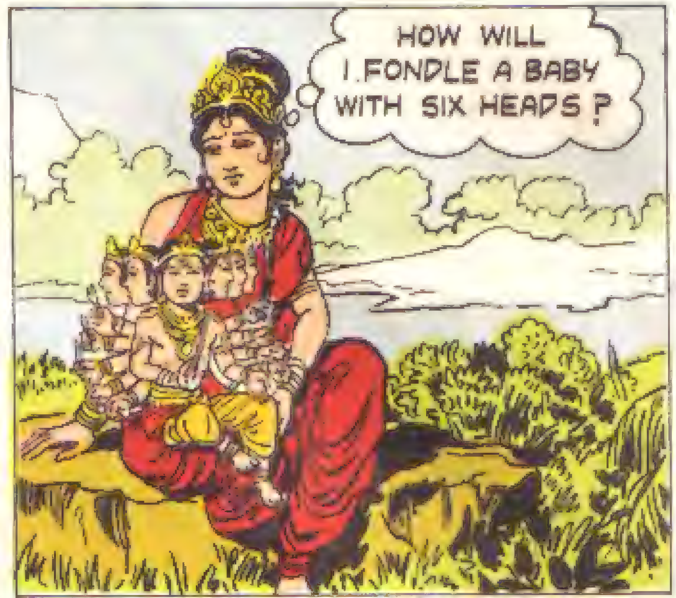




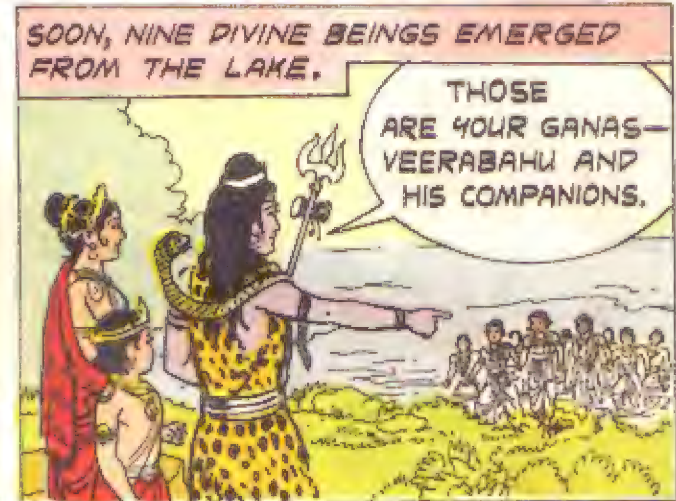





PEACE! PEACE! AS PARVATI'S SON HE WILL BE NAMED SKANDA AND AS THE SON OF THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST, SHARAVANA; AS THE KRITTIKAS' SON, KARTTIKEYA AND AS GANGA'S KUMARA; AS AGNI'S SON, MAHASENA AND AS MINE, GUHA.


HOW WILL I FONDLE A BABY WITH SIX HEADS?

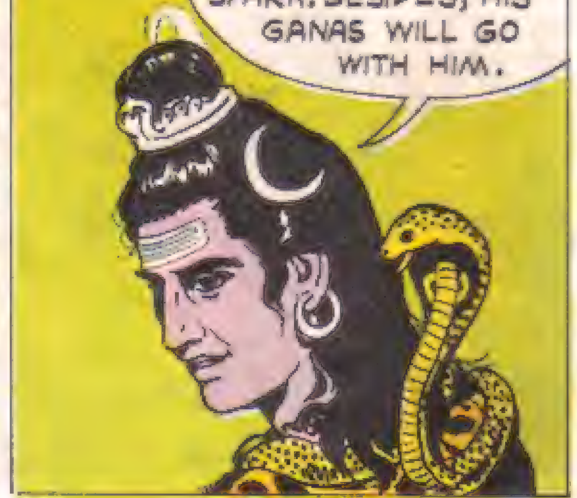

THE NEXT MINUTE—
MY SON!
KARTTIKEYA WAS NOW LIKE ANY OTHER CHILD.


SOON, NINE DIVINE BEINGS EMERGED FROM THE LAKE.
THOSE ARE YOUR GANAS— VEERABAHU AND HIS COMPANIONS.


THEN, AFTER THE DEVAS HAD WORSHIPPED LORD KARTTIKEYA ...


...SHIVA TOOK HIM TO HIS OWN ABODE, AT MOUNT KAILASA.


ONE DAY AT KAILASA—
PARVATI, THE TIME HAS COME FOR KARTTIKEYA TO SUBDUE TARAKASURA, SIMHAMUKHA, AND SURAPADMAN.
BUT HE IS JUST A CHILD, MY LORD, AND THEY ARE MIGHTY WARRIORS.


YES, BUT HE IS THE CHILD WITH THE DIVINE SPARK. BESIDES, HIS GANAS WILL GO WITH HIM.


SHIVA SUMMONED KARTTIKEYA AND VEERABAHU.
GET READY TO ATTACK SURAPADMAN AND HIS BROTHERS.


WHEN THE PREPARATIONS WERE COMPLETED—
YOU SHALL LEAD THE DEVAS TO VICTORY. CRUSH THE ASURAS AND LIBERATE THE DEVAS. HERE IS THE MATCHLESS VEL, YOUR SPEAR. MAY SUCCESS BE YOURS!


ARMED WITH THE SPEAR, KARTTIKEYA SET OUT IN PURSUIT OF THE ASURAS.


AFTER HE HAD COVERED SOME DISTANCE —
YOU WILL HAVE TO FACE ME, YOUNG BOY, BEFORE YOU PROCEED FURTHER.
IT WAS THE ASURA, KRAUNCHA IN THE FORM OF A MOUNTAIN.


WITHOUT A WORD, KARTTIKEYA HURLED HIS SPEAR…


…AND KRAUNCHA WAS NO MORE.


WHEN THE NEWS REACHED TARAKA—
KRAUNCHA DESTROYED? BY A SLIP OF A BOY?


WELL, WELL, LET ME GO AND SIZE HIM UP.


WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH KARTTIKEYA—
DON'T MISUSE THE WEAPONS GRANTED TO YOU. RELEASE THE DEVAS. YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS WILL BE FORGIVEN.
HOW DARE YOU, YOU IMPUDENT BOY! GET AWAY...


...BEFORE I KILL YOU!


VICTORY TO SHIVA!

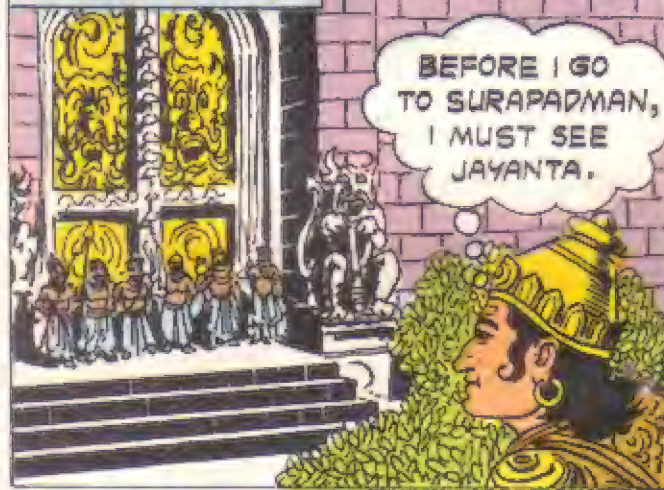


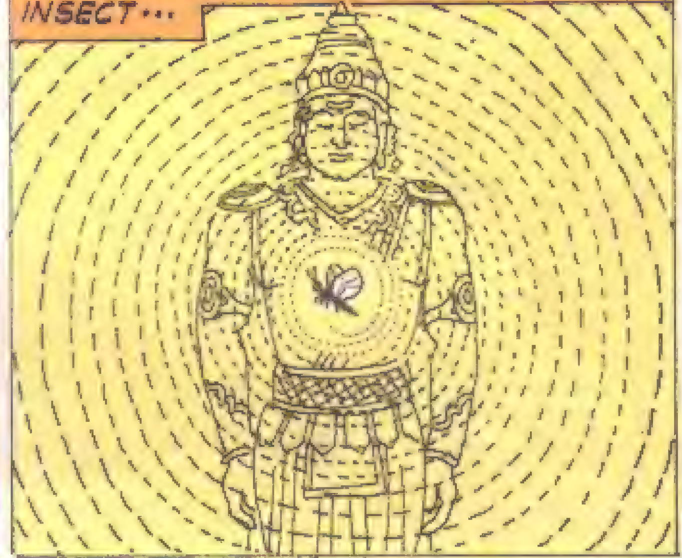

THIS WEAPON—
THE WEAPON GIVEN TO ME BY SHIVA—CANNOT FAIL!


YOU HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL THOSE WEAPONS, TARAKA. NOW LET ME TRY THE ONE I HAVE.


KARTTIKEYA'S SPEAR FOUND ITS MARK.
TARAKASURA IS SLAIN!
VICTORY TO KARTTIKEYA!

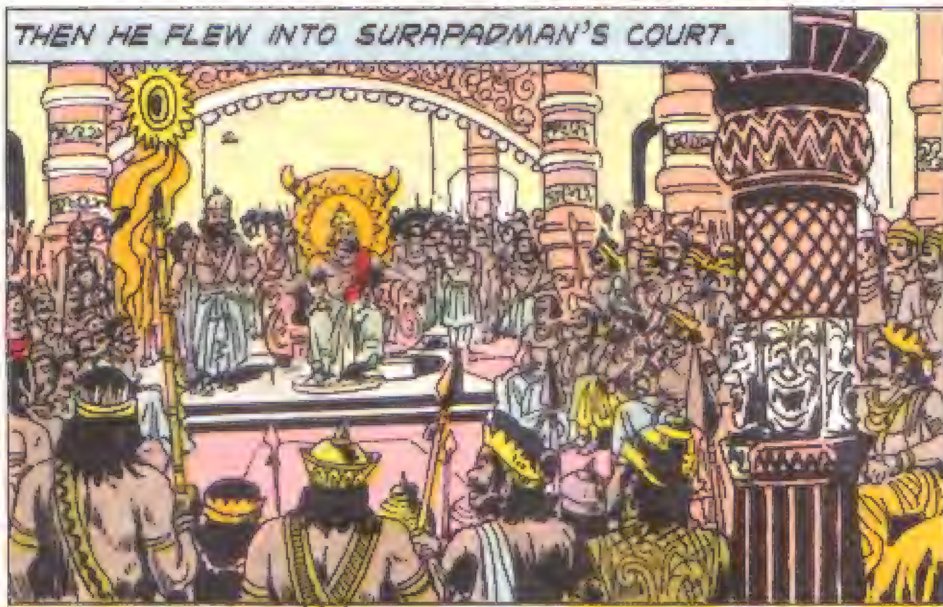

LATER—
VEERABAHU, TARAKASURA'S DEATH MAY HAVE BROUGHT HIS BROTHERS TO THEIR SENSES. GO AS MY ENVOY TO SURAPADMAN AND ASK HIM TO STOP PERSECUTING THE DEVAS.
AS YOU COMMAND, MY LORD.

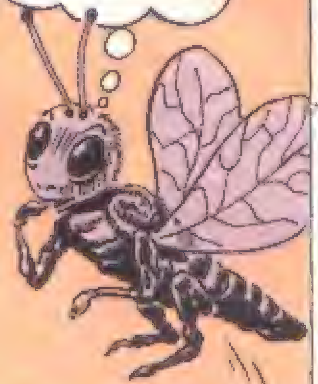

WHEN VEERABAHU REACHED SURAPADMAN'S CAPITAL, MAHENDRAPURI—
BEFORE I GO TO SURAPADMAN, I MUST SEE JAYANTA.

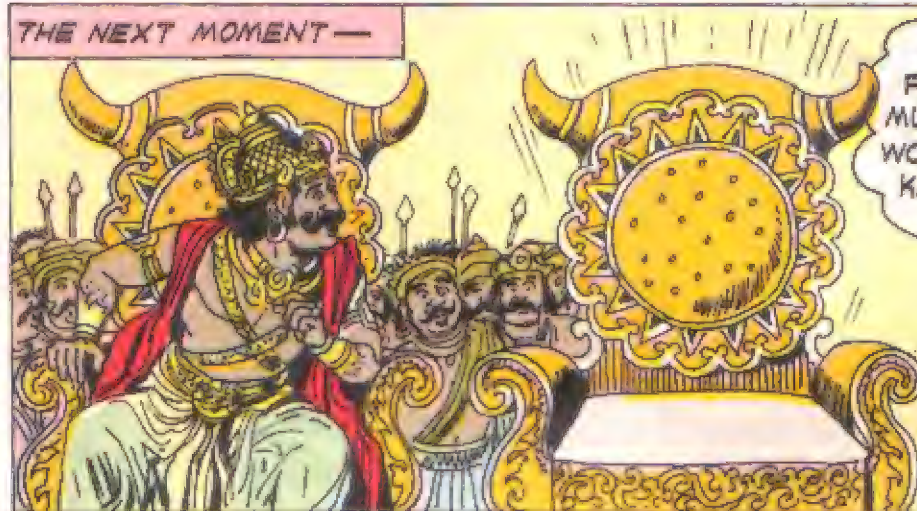

HE CHANGED HIMSELF INTO A TINY INSECT...


...AND FLEW INTO THE CITY.


IN THE PRISON—
JAYANTA, TARAKASURA IS DEAD. LORD KARTTIKEYA WILL SOON RESCUE YOU.


THEN HE FLEW INTO SURAPADMAN'S COURT.


I WILL ASSUME MY OWN FORM NOW. WILL SURAPADMAN OFFER ME A SEAT ?


THE NEXT MOMENT—


A THRONE FOR ME! IT MUST BE THE WORK OF LORD KARTTIKEYA!


WHO... WHO ARE YOU ?
I AM LORD KARTTIKEYA'S MESSENGER.


KARTTIKEYA! THE BOY WHO SLEW MY BROTHER!


YES. LORD KARTTIKEYA WANTS YOU TO RELEASE JAYANTA AND STOP TORTURING THE DEVAS OR ELSE...


...YOU WILL MEET WITH THE SAME FATE AS YOUR BROTHER!
A MERE CHILD DARES THREATEN ME! I'LL I'LL...


WHERE HAS HE GONE?
HE...HE'S VANISHED!


THERE WAS AN UNEASY SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN SIMHAMUKHA SPOKE.
MY INSTINCT TELLS ME THAT THIS KARTTIKEYA IS NO ORDINARY BOY.


REMEMBER KRAUNCHA... TARAKA... WHY DON'T WE RELEASE...
SIMHAMUKHA!


COWARD! NOT ANOTHER WORD!
BROTHER, IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT WISDOM IS OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR COWARDICE.


BY SPEAKING OUT, I HAVE DONE MY DUTY. NOW IT IS FOR YOU TO TAKE THE DECISION. I WILL GO BY IT.


IT'S WAR AGAINST THAT IMPUDENT BOY.

MEANWHILE VEERABAHU HAD REACHED KARTTIKEYA'S CAMP.

IT'S NO USE. SURAPADMAN WANTED TO CAPTURE ME TOO!

WELL, WE'LL MEET THEM IN BATTLE. PREPARE TO MARCH TO MAHENDRAPURI.

WHEN KARTTIKEYA'S ARMY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF MAHENDRAPURI, SURAPADMAN SENT HIS SON BANUKOPAN TO SUBDUE THEM.

BANUKOPAN FELL UPON THE DEVA ARMY.

ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE BATTLE—

COME, BANUKOPAN. TODAY, YOU SHALL NOT RETURN HOME.

I CERTAINLY WON'T. NOT TILL I'VE KILLED EVERY ONE OF YOU.

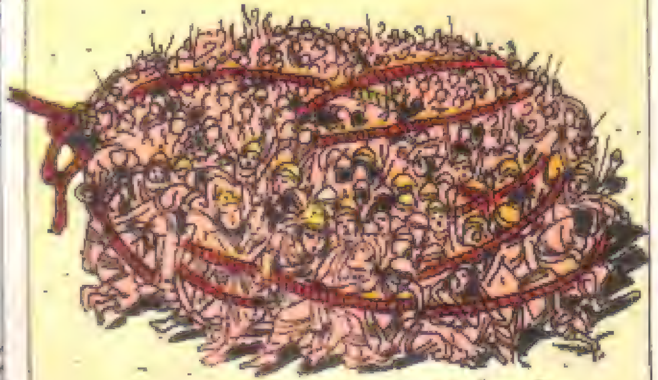

VEERABAHU RUSHED AT HIM AND THE TWO FOUGHT LONG AND HARD.


AT LAST BANUKOPAN FELL AND THE ASURAS FLED IN PANIC.


THE DEATH OF BANUKOPAN SHOOK SURAPADMAN.
SAVE US, SIMHAMUKHA!
I WILL DO MY BEST, BROTHER.

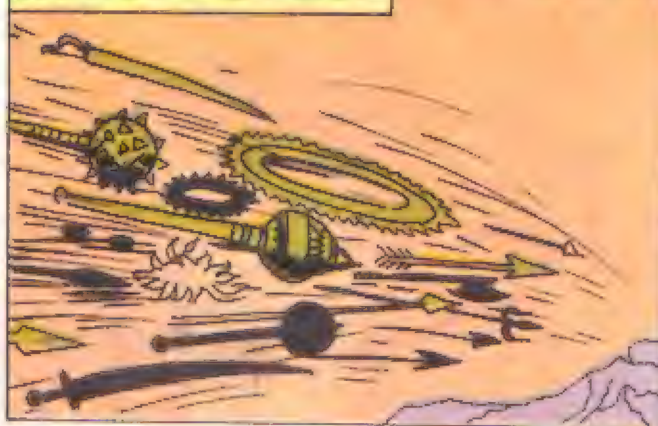

SO THE NEXT DAY SIMHAMUKHA LED THE ATTACK. THE ARMY OF THE DEVAS REELED UNDER HIS ONSLAUGHT.







...FAR, FAR AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.









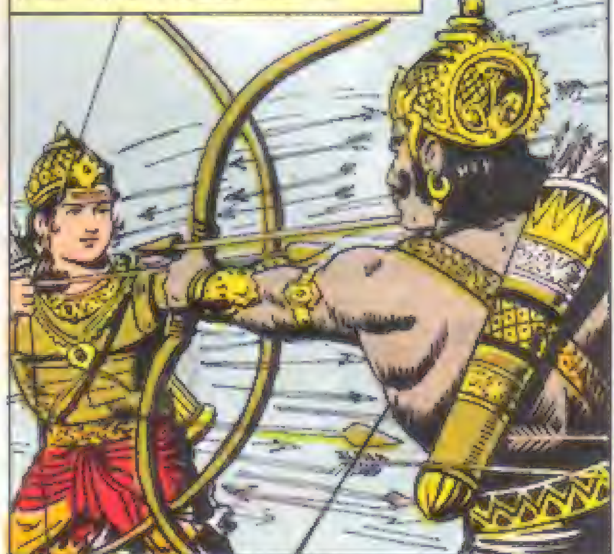




*INDRA'S WEAPON, THE THUNDERBOLT


THE NEXT DAY SURAPADMAN HIMSELF LED THE ASURAS TO THE BATTLEFIELD.
WE MUST DEFEAT KARTTIKEYA! SHOW YOUR METTLE TODAY.


WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH KARTTIKEYA—
MERCY OR DOOM? CHOOSE!
IMPUDENT CHILD! I HAVE COME TO SILENCE YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL.


THE TWO FOES MET.


THIS BOY IS NOT AS RAW AS I HAD EXPECTED! WHY, HE FIGHTS LIKE A SEASONED WARRIOR!


I'LL HAVE TO RESORT TO SORCERY. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO QUELL HIM!

THE NEXT MOMENT SHOWED ALL THE DEAD ASURAS ON THEIR FEET AND SURAPADMAN UP IN THE SKY IN A CHARIOT.





AND THIS — OF YOUR CHARIOT!

THE NEXT MOMENT —



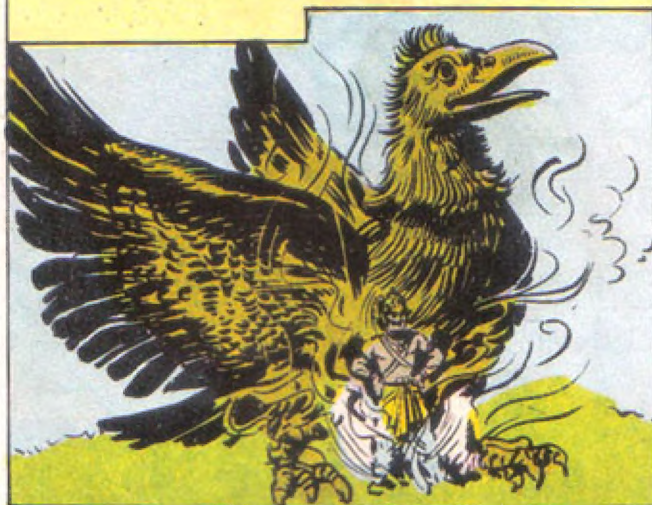
SOON—

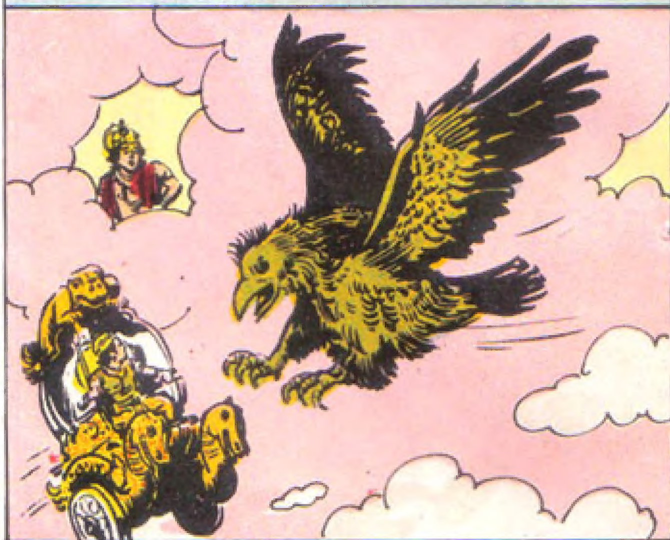
I MUST THANK YOU, SURAPADMAN, FOR PROVIDING ME WITH AN EXCELLENT CHARIOT.



I'LL CHANGE MY FORM AND ATTACK HIM.

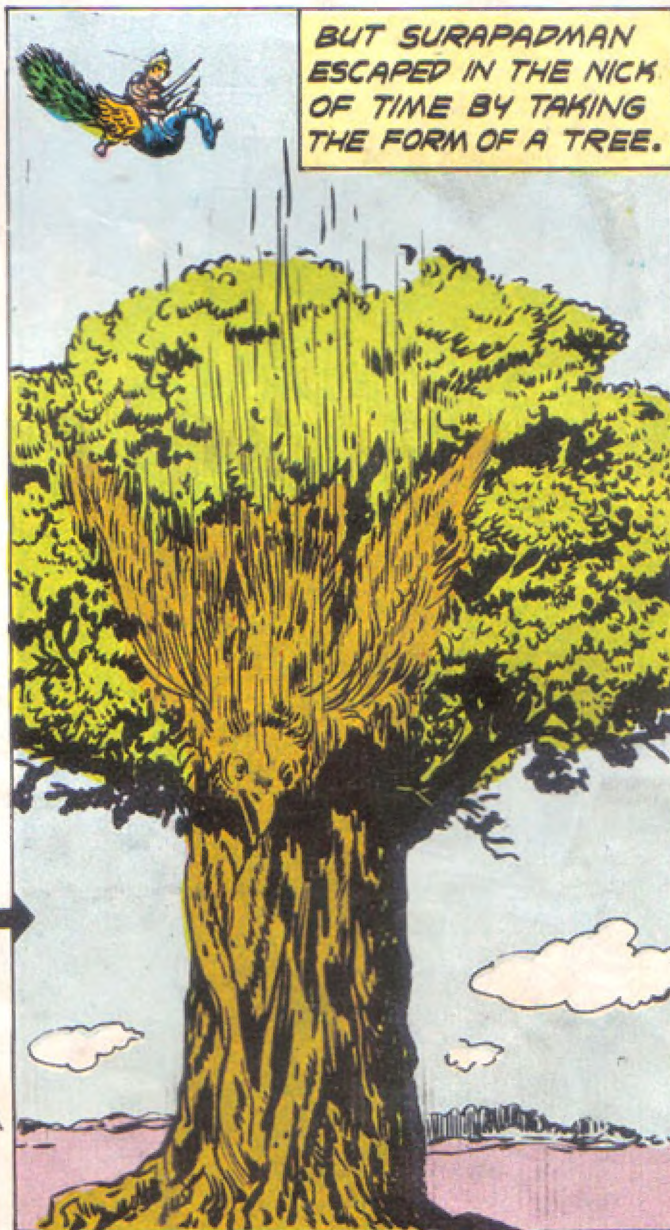



SURAPADMAN QUICKLY ASSUMED THE FORM OF A HUGE BIRD...


...AND CHARGED AT KARTTIKEYA.


KARTTIKEYA HOWEVER USING INDRA IN THE FORM OF PEACOCK AS HIS MOUNT...


...LASHED OUT AT HIM.


BUT SURAPADMAN ESCAPED IN THE NICK OF TIME BY TAKING THE FORM OF A TREE.

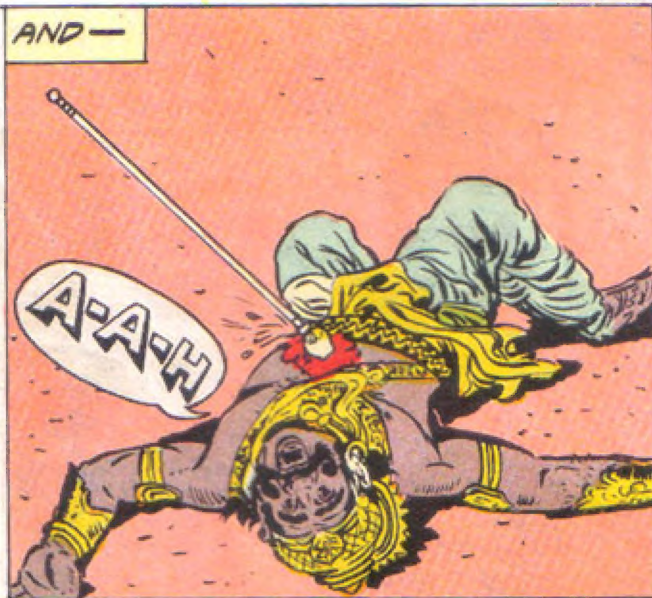

LEARN, O BLIND ONE! DARKNESS CANNOT HIDE BEFORE LIGHT!


AS THE SPEAR CUT THE TREE IN TWO, SURAPADMAN EMERGED UNSCATHED IN HIS NATURAL FORM.


I'LL CRUSH HIM WITH MY BULK!


SURAPADMAN CHARGED TOWARDS KARTTIKEYA.
I'LL CRUSH YOU UNDERFOOT. AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF YOU.


QUICK AS LIGHTNING, KARTTIKEYA HURLED HIS SPEAR AT HIM.


AND—
A-A-H


AS HE FELL, A GREAT CHANGE CAME OVER SURAPADMAN.
LORD, PARDON ME. I REPENT FOR MY EVIL ACTS. LORD, I SEEK REFUGE IN YOU.


KARTTIKEYA LOOKED AT THE FALLEN ASURA WITH COMPASSION.
SURAPADMAN, REPENTANCE WASHES AWAY ALL ONE'S SINS. YOU SHALL SERVE ME AS MY VEHICLE AND ALSO AS MY EMBLEM.


THUS SURAPADMAN ASSUMED TWO FORMS— ONE OF A PEACOCK TO SERVE AS A VEHICLE TO THE LORD AND ANOTHER OF A COCK TO ADORN KARTTIKEYA'S FLAG POST.
O KARTTIKEYA, WE BOW TO YOU IN REVERENCE.

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Jeevan and Hanu conclude that Health is Wealth



Whew! Isn't life strange, Jeevan?

Why do you say that?

Look, so far we have learned about great mental achievements and physical feats. I am wondering whether I will ever attain such glory.

Cheer up, Hanu! It's not necessary for you to make the pages of the World Records book right away. Why not just aim to have a sound mind and body to begin with?

If I do, will I get a medal, or a bunch of bananas at least?

Why, you might get something better than that! For a start you'll have a longer life....

Hey, wait a minute! Hasn't longevity something to do with life insurance?

It certainly does, Hanu. As a matter of fact the science of life insurance is based on the study of the life expectancy of a large group of people.

Well, anyway I'm only a kid. I shouldn't have to bother about life insurance, I suppose.

No, you should. Or I should, as your guardian.

How come?

I have a duty.... protecting your future. There are many plans of life insurance like the **Children's Anticipated Policy**, the **Children's Deferred Assurance Policy**, the **Educational Annuity Policy**, the **Marriage Endowment Policy**, etc. All parents and guardians should know about these policies.

How can they do that?

By asking the **L.I.C** agent about these plans and how they work.

Then take me to see an **L.I.C.** agent now!



daCunha/LIC/120/81



Life Insurance Corporation of India